



City of Rowlett
Joint Special Work Session Minutes
City Council
Park and Recreation Advisory Board
Keep Rowlett Beautiful

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City of Rowlett City Council meetings are available to all persons regardless of disability. If you require special assistance, please contact the City Secretary at 972-412-6115 or write 4000 Main Street, Rowlett, Texas, 75088, at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

Thursday, January 12, 2012

6:30 P.M.

Community Centre - 5300 Main Street
Room D

As authorized by Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code, this meeting may be convened into closed Executive Session for the purpose of seeking confidential legal advice from the City Attorney on any agenda item herein.

The City of Rowlett reserves the right to reconvene recess or realign the Regular Session or called Executive Session or order of business at any time prior to adjournment.

City Council Present: Mayor Gottel, Mayor Pro Tem Phillips, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Kilgore, Councilmember Davis, Councilmember Pankratz, Councilmember Miller and Councilmember Gallops

Parks Board Present: Chairman Baxter, Lonnie Cornwell, Brownie Sherrill, Ken Romaine and Rhetta Bowers

Parks Board Absent: Debby Bobbitt, Mike DeLatte, Mat Grubisich, John Macatee, Jr., Tien Nguyen, Rick Helfers, Paul Swearingen and Madeleine Palma

Keep Rowlett Beautiful Present: President Lancaster, Cheryl Harris, Jerry Barshop, Brandy Cox, Nancy Lancaster, Cynthia Baxter, Dan Roberts and Nelda Roberts

1. CALL TO ORDER

1A. City Council

Mayor Gottel called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

1B. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Chairman Baxter called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

1C. Keep Rowlett Beautiful

President Lancaster called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

2. WORK SESSION ITEMS

2A. Introductions.

Members of the Council, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Keep Rowlett Beautiful (KRB), City staff and LaTerra Studio were introduced.

2B. Status of Scenic Point Park Design Process. – Jermel Stevenson

Staff spoke regarding the Scenic Point Park Design Day process. A video was shown regarding the park. Staff then showed a PowerPoint presentation. Stated the first design day was November 19, 2011. Stated there were 51 onsite participants. Since that date there have been 244 participants completing the online survey. Stated the methods utilized to capture input included live voting devices, "kids corner", comment drop box, informal discussion room and photo documented opinions during holiday parade.

2C. History of Environmental Learning Center and Vision. – Keep Rowlett Beautiful Representative

President Lancaster presented a PowerPoint presentation. Spoke regarding the purpose and vision of the Rowlett Environmental Learning Center (ELC). Spoke regarding the history, the original concept plan and the Red Barn concept. Stated the ELC would provide mentoring opportunities in sustainability, water conservation, energy alternatives, green building practices, composting, xeriscaping and environmental career opportunities. Stated numerous established courses and funding are available through existing grant programs from many diverse sources.

A member of Council asked why the Chiesa Road location was chosen for the site.

It was stated that at the time, all parks were already spoken for and the location was also close to two schools.

A member of Council voiced concern regarding the potential noise that could be produced by a wind turbine.

President Lancaster continued the presentation. Spoke regarding numerous learning opportunities that would be available in the original concept. Spoke regarding funding. Stated KRB has encumbered charitable bingo funds for several years to be used for the ELC. Local organizations such as the Lions Club have offered funds and in-kind donations. Stated the primary funding source will be grant monies. KRB is currently researching grant programs. Maintenance and operational expenses will be minimized through the low maintenance landscaping and energy-neutral design.

Spoke regarding the following proposed design elements including: walking trails, an amphitheater and event space, fishing and non-motorized boating, nature-based playground, wildflower garden, wetland maintenance, low impact development, innovation, drought tolerant plants, shoreline restoration, bird, animal and aquatic habitat areas and viewing, and low maintenance design.

Spoke how relocating the ELC to Scenic Point Park would improve both projects:

- Allows combining funding to result in an enhanced community gateway park.
- Expands the scope of the ELC to include shoreline and lake restoration/preservation.
- Expands the scope of Scenic Point to become a North Texas destination.
- Frees up the Chiesa Road site for more appropriate neighborhood park use.

Stated the City of Rowlett and KRB could work together to make the ELC a reality by:

- By creating a common vision for the ELC at Scenic Point Park.
- By informing the citizens of our vision and garnering their support.
- By integrating the ELC into the design for Scenic Point Park.
- By working together to investigate funding opportunities.
- By promoting the ELC to the public as an important part of Rowlett's future.

2D. Discussion on appropriate location for Environmental Learning Center. – All

Mayor Gottel stated 'What is the right use for the property?'

Chairman Baxter questioned staff regarding the acreage difference between the two locations.

Michael Black, representative from LaTerra Studio stated they are in the process of developing three master plans for citizen input next week; stated approximately 75% of the original ELC programming elements could function easily on the Scenic Point property; stated the access is fairly limited; stated there may be some issues with Corp of Engineers, floodplains and environmental issues along the shoreline.

It was stated that any buildings incorporated at Scenic Point Park must have minimal impact on the environment.

Staff spoke regarding the vision of Scenic Point Park; stated to get the full potential of the park, a consulting partner was need with 'our' vision.

Mr. Black spoke regarding the use of technology (QR codes) in the park so not to disturb the environment.

Comments made by the Council including: the opportunity to incorporate the ELC into the Scenic Point Park design; by having the ELC on the lake, it adds to Rowlett being a destination; provides an opportunity to bring in higher education; will put the City 'over the edge' as a regional feature; the parking obstacle; the accessibility and ease in locating the park; Scenic

Point Park is not the ELC but the ELC can be incorporated at Scenic Point Park; Scenic Point Park needs to be distinctive and a draw while adhering to the envisioned concept of Scenic Point Park; and Scenic Point Park is an environment learning center in and of itself.

Comments made by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board including: the combination of Scenic Point Park and the ELC will be a win-win situation; the location on the lake is the best location for the ELC; the ELC has been at a standstill so by incorporating it at Scenic Point Park, it will move the center forward; concerns about LEED construction and meeting criteria; the issues with wetlands, the Corp of Engineers, and grants.

A citizen stated he did not want the ELC to be compromised; spoke regarding the constraints of Scenic Point Park and possibly swapping land with nearby landowners.

Comments were made by KRB including: Scenic Point Park enhances the nature side of the ELC that was not available at the Chiesa Road location; this could be a sustainability center which would educate people on how we are dependent on the natural environment and how the natural environment is depended on us; grants, bonds and money from environmental waste contracts for environmental improvements.

A member of Council asked if there are any avenues that could be delivered in a concept and easily demonstrated without a building.

Additional comments were made including: Scenic Point Park must be a sustainable park and the future plans of the park on Chiesa Road.

Staff spoke regarding the excitement of the respondents; stated over 300 of the respondents do not want anything forced on them but were interested in a nature setting.

2E. Where we go from here? – Jermel Stevenson and Michael Black

Mr. Black stated three concept designs will be shown at the January 21st meeting. He further stated that none of the concepts have built designs.

It was stated that the City has limited funds to get the park to a certain level.

Mr. Black stated they would build the park in a logical order to accommodate the funds.

Staff stated they would maximize the build out and would incrementally receive grants.

It was also stated that KRB has encumbered fund for the ELC.

Consensus was reached to move forward and explore the possibilities of moving the ELC and to include the idea concerning researching if a concept can be demonstrated without a building.

It was stated that this is an opportunity to take a journey and the ELC can potentially be better; stated many things are working in its favor; and Scenic Point Park has been recognized in the Realize Rowlett 2020 Project as having recreational opportunity.

3. ADJOURNMENT

3A. City Council


Mayor Gottel adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

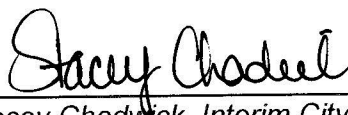
3B. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Chairman Baxter adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.

3C. Keep Rowlett Beautiful

President Lancaster adjourned the meeting at 8:43 p.m.



Todd W. Gottel, Mayor

Stacey Chadwick, Interim City Secretary

Date Approved: February 7, 2012

